

## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for preparing an [[An]] edible product comprising a sweetening agent for masking a bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the edible product, said product additionally the method comprising:

providing an amount of sweetening agent that is insufficient to entirely mask the bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the edible product; and

adding a plant sterol ester in an amount that, in combination with the sweetening agent, is effective to reduce the amount of sweetening agent used to mask the bitter, sour, and/or astringent taste of the edible product in comparison to a comparable edible product which does not comprise the plant sterol ester,

wherein the amount of plant sterol ester added is from 0.2 to 25% by weight.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently Amended) The product method of claim 1, wherein the amount of plant sterol ester added in the product is from 0.5 to 15% by weight.

4. (Currently Amended) The product method of claim 1, wherein the sweetening agent provided comprises a carbohydrate sweetening agent or a non-carbohydrate sweetening agent or a mixture thereof.

5. (Currently Amended) The product method of claim 4, wherein the amount of

carbohydrate sweetening agent in the product is from 0.1 to 30% by weight, and wherein the amount of non-carbohydrate sweetening agent in the product is from 0.00005 to 0.08% by weight.

6. (Canceled)

7. (Currently Amended) The product method of claim 1, wherein the plant sterol ester is sterol fatty acid ester.

8. (Currently Amended) The product method of claim 1, wherein the plant sterol ester is plant stanol fatty acid ester.

9. (Currently Amended) The product method of claim 1, wherein the viscosity of the product is 0.001 to 2.0 Pas.

10. (Currently Amended) A method for preparing a cereal milk based drink comprising 0.5-8.0% ~~by weight~~ a carbohydrate sweetening agent for masking a bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the cereal milk based drink, the method comprising:

providing an amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent that is insufficient to entirely mask the bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the cereal milk based drink; and

adding said drink additionally comprising a plant sterol ester in an amount that, in combination with the carbohydrate sweetening agent, is effective to reduce the amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent used to mask the bitter, sour, and/or astringent taste

of the cereal milk based drink ~~in comparison to a comparable cereal milk based drink which does not comprise the plant sterol ester,~~

wherein the amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent provided is 0.5-8.0% by weight, and

wherein the amount of plant sterol ester added is 0.2-10% by weight.

11. (Currently Amended) A method for preparing a milk based cocoa drink comprising ~~0.2-8.0% by weight~~ a carbohydrate sweetening agent for masking a bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the milk based cocoa drink, the method comprising:

providing an amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent that is insufficient to entirely mask the bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the milk based cocoa drink; and

adding ~~said~~ drink additionally comprising a plant sterol ester in an amount that, in combination with the carbohydrate sweetening agent, is effective to reduce the amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent used to mask the bitter, sour, and/or astringent taste of the milk based cocoa drink in comparison to a comparable milk based cocoa drink which does not comprise the plant sterol ester,

wherein the amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent provided is 0.2-8.0% by weight, and

wherein the amount of plant sterol ester added is 0.2-10% by weight.

12. (Currently Amended) A method for preparing a milk based coffee drink comprising ~~0.1-6.5% by weight~~ a carbohydrate sweetening agent for masking a bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the milk based coffee drink, the method comprising:

providing an amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent that is insufficient to  
entirely mask the bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the milk based coffee drink; and  
adding said drink additionally comprising a plant sterol ester in an amount that, in  
combination with the carbohydrate sweetening agent, is effective to reduce the amount  
of carbohydrate sweetening agent used to mask the bitter, sour, and/or astringent taste  
of the milk based coffee drink in comparison to a comparable milk based coffee drink  
which does not comprise the plant sterol ester,

wherein the amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent provided is 0.1-6.5% by  
weight, and

wherein the amount of plant sterol ester added is 0.2-7.0% by weight.

13. (Currently Amended) A method for preparing a soy milk based drink  
comprising 0.1-2.3% by weight a carbohydrate sweetening agent for masking a bitter,  
sour and/or astringent taste of the soy milk based drink, the method comprising:

providing an amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent that is insufficient to  
entirely mask the bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the soy milk based drink; and  
adding said drink additionally comprising a plant sterol ester in an amount that, in  
combination with the carbohydrate sweetening agent, is effective to reduce the amount  
of carbohydrate sweetening agent used to mask the bitter, sour, and/or astringent taste  
of the soy milk based drink in comparison to a comparable soy milk based drink which  
does not comprise the plant sterol ester,

wherein the amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent provided is 0.1-2.3% by  
weight, and

wherein the amount of plant sterol ester added is 0.2-10% by weight.

14. (Currently Amended) A method for preparing a soy milk based drink comprising 0.00005-0.05% by weight a non-carbohydrate sweetening agent for masking a bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the soy milk based drink, the method comprising:  
providing an amount of non-carbohydrate sweetening agent that is insufficient to  
entirely mask the bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the soy milk based drink; and  
adding said drink additionally comprising and a plant sterol ester in an amount that, in combination with the non-carbohydrate sweetening agent, is effective to reduce the amount of non-carbohydrate sweetening agent used to mask the bitter, sour, and/or astringent taste of the soy milk based drink in comparison to a comparable soy milk based drink which does not comprise the plant sterol ester,  
wherein the amount of non-carbohydrate sweetening agent provided is 0.00005  
0.05% by weight, and

wherein the amount of plant sterol ester added is 0.2-10% by weight.

15. (Currently Amended) A method for preparing a fruit and/or flavoured drink comprising soy and 0.1-9.0% by weight a carbohydrate sweetening agent for masking a bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the fruit and/or flavoured drink, the method comprising:  
providing an amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent that is insufficient to  
entirely mask the bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the fruit and/or flavoured drink;  
and

adding said drink additionally comprising a plant sterol ester in an amount that, in combination with the carbohydrate sweetening agent, is effective to reduce the amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent used to mask the bitter, sour, and/or astringent taste of the fruit and/or flavoured drink in comparison to a comparable fruit and/or flavoured drink which does not comprise the plant sterol ester,

wherein the amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent provided is 0.1-9.0% by weight, and

wherein the amount of plant sterol ester added is 0.2-10% by weight.

16. (Currently Amended) A method for preparing a fruit and/or flavoured drink comprising soy and 0.00005-0.05% by weight a non-carbohydrate sweetening agent for masking a bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the fruit and/or flavoured drink, the method comprising:

providing an amount of non-carbohydrate sweetening agent that is insufficient to entirely mask the bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the fruit and/or flavoured drink; and

adding said drink additionally comprising a plant sterol ester in an amount that, in combination with the non-carbohydrate sweetening agent, is effective to reduce the amount of non-carbohydrate sweetening agent used to mask the bitter, sour, and/or astringent taste of the fruit and/or flavoured drink in comparison to a comparable fruit and/or flavoured drink which does not comprise the plant sterol ester,

wherein the amount of non-carbohydrate sweetening agent provided is 0.00005-0.05% by weight, and

wherein the amount of plant sterol ester added is 0.2-10% by weight.

17. (Currently Amended) A method for preparing a coffee or cocoa drink comprising soy and ~~0.1-5.5% by weight a~~ carbohydrate sweetening agent for masking a bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the coffee or cocoa drink, the method comprising:  
providing an amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent that is insufficient to  
entirely mask the bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the coffee or cocoa drink; and  
adding said drink additionally comprising a plant sterol ester in an amount that, in  
combination with the carbohydrate sweetening agent, is effective to reduce the amount  
of carbohydrate sweetening agent used to mask the bitter, sour, and/or astringent taste  
of the coffee or cocoa drink in comparison to a comparable coffee or cocoa drink which  
does not comprise the plant sterol ester,  
wherein the amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent provided is 0.1-5.5% by  
weight, and

wherein the amount of plant sterol ester added is 0.2-10% by weight.

18. (Currently Amended) A method for preparing a coffee or cocoa drink comprising soy and ~~0.00005-0.05% by weight a~~ non-carbohydrate sweetening agent for masking a bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the coffee or cocoa drink, the method comprising:  
providing an amount of non-carbohydrate sweetening agent that is insufficient to  
entirely mask the bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the coffee or cocoa drink; and  
adding said drink additionally comprising a plant sterol ester in an amount that, in

combination with the non-carbohydrate sweetening agent, is effective to reduce the amount of non-carbohydrate sweetening agent used to mask the bitter, sour, and/or astringent taste of the coffee or cocoa drink in comparison to a comparable coffee or cocoa drink which does not comprise the plant sterol ester,

wherein the amount of non-carbohydrate sweetening agent provided is 0.00005-0.05% by weight, and

wherein the amount of plant sterol ester added is 0.2-10% by weight.

19. (Currently Amended) A method for preparing a whey based drink comprising 0.5-7.0% by weight a carbohydrate sweetening agent for masking a bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the cereal whey based drink, the method comprising:

providing an amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent that is insufficient to entirely mask the bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the whey based drink; and

adding said drink additionally comprising a plant sterol ester in an amount that, in combination with the carbohydrate sweetening agent, is effective to reduce the amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent used to mask the bitter, sour, and/or astringent taste of the whey based drink in comparison to a comparable whey based drink which does not comprise the plant sterol ester,

wherein the amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent provided is 0.5-7.0% by weight, and

wherein the amount of plant sterol ester added is 0.2-7.0% by weight.

20. (Currently Amended) A method for preparing a berry based drink

comprising 0.5-19% by weight a carbohydrate sweetening agent for masking a bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the berry based drink, the method comprising:

providing an amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent that is insufficient to entirely mask the bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the berry based drink; and  
adding said drink additionally comprising a plant sterol ester in an amount that, in combination with the carbohydrate sweetening agent, is effective to reduce the amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent used to mask the bitter, sour, and/or astringent taste of the berry based drink in comparison to a comparable berry based drink which does not comprise the plant sterol ester,

wherein the amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent provided is 0.5-19% by weight, and

wherein the amount of plant sterol ester added is 0.2-5.0% by weight.

21. (Currently Amended) A method of preparing a fruit juice based drink comprising 0.1-7.5% by weight sucrose for masking a bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the fruit juice based drink, the method comprising:

providing an amount of sucrose that is insufficient to entirely mask the bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the fruit juice based drink; and

adding said drink additionally comprising a plant sterol ester in an amount that, in combination with the sucrose, is effective to reduce the amount of sucrose used to mask the bitter, sour, and/or astringent taste of the berry fruit juice based drink in comparison to a comparable fruit juice based drink which does not comprise the plant sterol ester,

wherein the amount of sucrose provided is 0.1-7.5% by weight, and

wherein the amount of plant sterol ester added is 0.2-5.0% by weight.

22. (Currently Amended) A method of preparing a fruit juice based drink comprising ~~at least 50% by weight a~~ citrus fruit juice calculated on the amount of total fruit juice in the product and ~~0.2-7.5% by weight a~~ carbohydrate sweetening agent for masking a bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the fruit juice based drink, the method comprising:

providing an amount of citrus fruit juice and carbohydrate sweetening agent that is insufficient to entirely mask the bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the fruit juice based drink; and

adding said drink additionally comprising and a plant sterol ester in an amount that, in combination with the citrus fruit juice and the carbohydrate sweetening agent, is effective to ~~reduce the amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent used to mask the bitter, sour, and/or astringent taste of the fruit juice based drink in comparison to a comparable fruit juice based drink which does not comprise the plant sterol ester,~~

wherein the amount of citrus fruit juice provided is at least 50% by weight calculated on the amount of total fruit juice in the product,

wherein the amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent provided is 0.2-7.5% by weight, and

wherein the amount of plant sterol ester added is 0.2-5.0% by weight.

23. (Currently Amended) A method for preparing a fruit juice based drink

comprising 0.00005-0.05% by weight a non-carbohydrate sweetening agent for masking a bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the fruit juice based drink, the method comprising:

providing an amount of non-carbohydrate sweetening agent that is insufficient to entirely mask the bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the fruit juice based drink; and

adding said drink additionally comprising a plant sterol ester in an amount that, in combination with the non-carbohydrate sweetening agent, is effective to reduce the amount of non-carbohydrate sweetening agent used to mask the bitter, sour, and/or astringent taste of the fruit juice based drink in comparison to a comparable fruit juice based drink which does not comprise the plant sterol ester,

wherein the amount of non-carbohydrate sweetening agent provided is 0.00005-0.05% by weight, and

wherein the amount of plant sterol ester added is 0.2-5.0% by weight.

24. (Currently Amended) A method for preparing a fermented milk product comprising 0.5-6.0% by weight a carbohydrate sweetening agent for masking a bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the fermented milk product, the method comprising:

providing an amount of non-carbohydrate sweetening agent that is insufficient to entirely mask the bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the fermented milk product; and

adding said product additionally comprising a plant sterol ester in an amount that, in combination with the carbohydrate sweetening agent, is effective to reduce the amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent used to mask the bitter, sour, and/or astringent taste of the fermented milk product in comparison to a comparable fermented

~~milk product which does not comprise the plant sterol ester,~~

wherein the amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent provided is 0.5-6.0% by weight, and

wherein the amount of plant sterol ester added is 0.2-8.0% by weight.

25. (Currently Amended) A method for preparing a fermented milk product comprising ~~0.00005-0.08% by weight a~~ non-carbohydrate sweetening agent for masking a bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the fermented milk product, the method comprising:

providing an amount of non-carbohydrate sweetening agent that is insufficient to entirely mask the bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the fermented milk product; and

adding said product additionally comprising a plant sterol ester in an amount that, in combination with the non-carbohydrate sweetening agent, is effective to reduce the amount of non-carbohydrate sweetening agent used to mask the bitter, sour, and/or astringent taste of the fermented milk product in comparison to a comparable fermented milk product which does not comprise the plant sterol ester,

wherein the amount of non-carbohydrate sweetening agent provided is 0.00005-0.08% by weight, and

wherein the amount of plant sterol ester added is 0.2-8.0% by weight.

26. (Currently Amended) A method for preparing a cereal-based yoghurt product comprising ~~0.5-9.5% by weight a~~ carbohydrate sweetening agent for masking a bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the cereal-based yoghurt product, the method

comprising:

providing an amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent that is insufficient to entirely mask the bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the cereal-based yoghurt product; and

adding said product additionally comprising a plant sterol ester in an amount that, in combination with the carbohydrate sweetening agent, is effective to reduce the amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent used to mask the bitter, sour, and/or astringent taste of the cereal-based yoghurt product in comparison to a comparable cereal-based yoghurt product which does not comprise the plant sterol ester,

wherein the amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent provided is 0.5-9.5% by weight, and

wherein the amount of plant sterol ester added is 0.2-12% by weight.

27. (Currently Amended) A method for preparing a yoghurt product comprising soy and 0.5-9.0% by weight a carbohydrate sweetening agent for masking a bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the yoghurt product, the method comprising:

providing an amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent that is insufficient to entirely mask the bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the yoghurt product; and

adding said product additionally comprising a plant sterol ester in an amount that, in combination with the carbohydrate sweetening agent, is effective to reduce the amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent used to mask the bitter, sour, and/or astringent taste of the yoghurt product in comparison to a comparable yoghurt product which does not comprise the plant sterol ester,

wherein the amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent provided is 0.5-9.0 % by weight, and

wherein the amount of plant sterol ester added is 0.2-12% by weight.

28. (Currently Amended) A method for preparing a yoghurt product comprising soy and ~~0.00005-0.08% by weight~~ a non-carbohydrate sweetening agent for masking a bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the yoghurt product, the method comprising:

providing an amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent that is insufficient to entirely mask the bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the yoghurt product; and

adding said product additionally comprising a plant sterol ester in an amount that, in combination with the non-carbohydrate sweetening agent, is effective to reduce the amount of non-carbohydrate sweetening agent used to mask the bitter, sour, and/or astringent taste of the yoghurt product in comparison to a comparable yoghurt product which does not comprise the plant sterol ester,

wherein the amount of non-carbohydrate sweetening agent provided is 0.00005-0.08% by weight, and

wherein the amount of plant sterol ester added is 0.2.-12% by weight.

29. (Currently Amended) A method for preparing [[An]] an ice cream product comprising ~~0.5-7.0% by weight~~ a carbohydrate sweetening agent for masking a bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the ice cream product, the method comprising:

providing an amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent that is insufficient to entirely mask the bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the ice cream product; and

adding said product additionally comprising a plant sterol ester in an amount that, in combination with the carbohydrate sweetening agent, is effective to reduce the amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent used to mask the bitter, sour, and/or astringent taste of the ice cream product in comparison to a comparable ice cream product which does not comprise the plant sterol ester,

wherein the amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent provided is 0.5-7.0% by weight, and

wherein the amount of plant sterol ester added is 0.2-18% by weight.

30. (Currently Amended) A method for preparing a liquid meal replacement product comprising 0.5-6.5% by weight a carbohydrate sweetening agent for masking a bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the liquid meal replacement product, the method comprising:

providing an amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent that is insufficient to entirely mask the bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the liquid meal replacement product; and

adding said product additionally comprising a plant sterol ester in an amount that, in combination with the carbohydrate sweetening agent, is effective to reduce the amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent used to mask the bitter, sour, and/or astringent taste of the liquid meal replacement product in comparison to a comparable liquid meal replacement product which does not comprise the plant sterol ester,

wherein the amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent provided is 0.5-6.5% by weight, and

wherein the amount of plant sterol ester added is 0.2-10% by weight.

31. (Currently Amended) A method for preparing a tea based drink comprising 0.5-17% by weight a carbohydrate sweetening agent for masking a bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the tea based drink, the method comprising:

providing an amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent that is insufficient to entirely mask the bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the tea based drink; and

adding said drink additionally comprising a plant sterol ester in an amount that, in combination with the carbohydrate sweetening agent, is effective to reduce the amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent used to mask the bitter, sour, and/or astringent taste of the tea based drink in comparison to a comparable tea based drink which does not comprise the plant sterol ester,

wherein the amount of carbohydrate sweetening agent provided is 0.5-17% by weight, and

wherein the amount of plant sterol ester added is 0.2-5.0% by weight.

32. (Currently Amended) A method for masking a bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of an edible product comprising a sweetening agent for masking the bitter, sour, and/or astringent taste of the edible product, the method comprising:

providing an amount of sweetening agent that is insufficient to entirely mask the bitter, sour and/or astringent taste of the edible product; and

adding incorporating into the edible product a plant sterol ester in an amount that, in combination with the sweetening agent, is effective to reduce the amount of

~~sweetening agent used to mask the bitter, sour, and/or astringent taste of the edible product in comparison to a comparable edible product which does not comprise the plant sterol ester, wherein the amount of plant sterol ester added is from 0.2 to 25% by weight.~~

33. (Canceled)

34. (Canceled)

35. (Currently Amended) The product method of claim 3, wherein the amount of plant sterol ester added in the product is from 1 to 10% by weight.